

Serial No.: 10/028,647
Examiner: Philip J. Chea

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant(s):	Michele Goodwin	Docket:	134074
Serial No.:	10/028,647	Art Unit:	2153
Filed:	12/19/2001	Examiner:	Philip J. Chea
Title:	VLAN Advertisement Protocol (VAP)		

AMENDMENT

Mail Stop NonFee Amendments
Commissioner for Patents
P. O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Certificate Under 37 C.F.R. §1.8(a)

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted **via EFS-WEB** to the Patent Office to telephone number, Attention **Examiner Philip J. Chea**, on April 4, 2006 in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.6(d).

/Jerri Pearson/

Jerri Pearson

Dear Sir:

In response to the Office Action ("Office Action") dated 01/04/2006 with the statutory response deadline set to expire on 04/04/2006, please enter the following:

In the claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

Please cancel claims 21 and 22.

1. (currently amended) A communication network comprising:
 - at least two switches, each switch being capable of maintaining a database of VLAN membership, with said first switch utilizing a first source learning function to maintain the database of VLAN membership, and said second switch using a second source learning function to maintain the database of VLAN membership, wherein said first source learning function is independent to said second source learning function;
 - a backbone network interconnecting the switches; and
 - at least one network node coupled to at least one of the switches,
 - wherein the VLAN membership databases in said at least two switches are synchronized with one another via a VLAN advertisement protocol (VAP), and further wherein a user can disable the at least two switches from synchronizing with each other using the VAP.
2. (original) The communication network according to claim 1, wherein VLANs and the VLAN membership are dynamically provisioned across the backbone network.
3. (original) The communication network according to claim 1, wherein VLANs and the VLAN membership are statically provisioned across the backbone network.
4. (original) The communication network according to claim 1, wherein when coupling of said at least one network node is moved from a first switch to a second switch, the second switch is capable of advertising the move.

5. (original) The communication network according to claim 4, wherein the first switch is capable of learning of the move, whereby the first switch does not go through a full time out period.

6. (original) The communication network according to claim 1, wherein a protocol between said at least two switches has topology discovery capability.

7. (previously presented) The communication network according to claim 6, wherein the topology discovery capability comprises a capability to learn topology connectivity as to which port is connected to which other port.

8. (original) The communication network according to claim 6, wherein the topology discovery capability comprises a capability to learn topology connectivity of at least one selected from a group consisting of IP addresses, MACs and VLANs.

9. (original) The communication network according to claim 1, wherein when a second switch is reachable through a plurality of IP addresses by a first switch, the first switch is capable of learning that the IP addresses are on the second switch with a plurality of addressable interfaces, each addressable interface corresponding to one of the IP addresses.

10. (original) The communication network according to claim 1, wherein the VLAN membership is determined by applying at least one policy with precedence policy to a specific traffic.

11. (original) The communication network according to claim 1, wherein at least one switch is capable of automatically discovering network nodes in the network.

12. (original) The communication network according to claim 1, wherein at least one switch advertises connectivity of at least one network node across at least a portion of the backbone network.

13.(previously presented). The communication network according to claim 7, wherein a network node is moved from a first port to a second, and wherein the VLAN membership for the network node is remembered.

14. (original) The communication network according to claim 13, wherein a first switch includes the first port and a second switch includes the second port.

15(currently amended). A communication network comprising:
at least two switches, each switch being capable of maintaining a MAC table, with said first switch utilizing a first source learning function to maintain the MAC table, and said second switch using a second source learning function to maintain the MAC table, wherein said first source learning function is independent to said second source learning function;
a backbone network interconnecting the switches, said backbone network utilizing a VLAN advertisement protocol (VAP); and
at least one network node coupled to at least one of the switches,
wherein said at least two switches exchange MAC information, wherein at least one switch uses the MAC information from at least one other switch to update its MAC table, and further wherein a user can disable the at least two switches from exchanging MAC information using the VAP.

16. (original) The communication network according to claim 15, wherein at least one switch generates a frame that contains a unique ID.

17. (original) The communication network according to claim 15, wherein at least one switch builds an adjacency table.

18. (original) The communication network according to claim 15, wherein at least one switch advertises its VLAN membership information.

19. (original) The communication network according to claim 15, wherein at least one switch generates a frame that includes a list of at least one virtual router port in that switch.

20. canceled.

21. canceled

22. canceled

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-19 remain in this application with claims 1 and 15 independent claims. Claims 1 and 15 have been amended, and claims 21 and 22 have been canceled.

In the outstanding official action, independent claim 1 was rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by Stone (US 6,041,057). Applicant asserts that claim 1 as now amend overcomes this rejections. In particular, Applicant asserts that neither Stone nor any of the cited references, whether taken alone, or in any reasonable combination, teach disclose or render obvious that “a user can disable the at least two switches from synchronizing with each other using the VAP”. As such, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejection of dependent claims 2-14, as these claims depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 1, and therefore incorporate all the limitations therein, for the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1, Applicant respectfully asserts that these claims are also patentable over the cited references.

In the outstanding official action, independent claim 15 was rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by Dobbins et al. (US 5,825,772). Applicant asserts that claim 15 as now amend overcomes this rejections. In particular, Applicant asserts that neither Dobbins et al. nor any of the cited references, whether taken alone, or in any reasonable combination, teach disclose or render obvious that “a user can disable the at least two switches from exchanging MAC information using the VAP”. As such, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejection of dependent claims 16-19, as these claims depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 15, and therefore incorporate all the limitations therein, for the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 15, Applicant respectfully asserts that these claims are also patentable over the cited references.

It is believed that the foregoing amendment places the Application in condition for allowance; therefore, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection of the claims, and full allowance of same. Should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned to expeditiously resolve any outstanding issues.

Respectfully submitted,

ALCATEL

Dated: April 4, 2006

/Craig A. Hoersten/
Craig A. Hoersten
Reg. No. 38,917

Alcatel
Intellectual Property Department
3400 W. Plano Parkway, M/S LEG2
Plano, TX 75075
Phone: (972) 519-5143
Fax: (972) 477-9328